

REMARKS:

The abstract of the disclosure has been objected to because it houses words in excess of 150. The length of the abstract has accordingly been reduced in accordance with the Examiner's request.

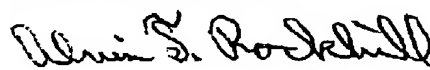
The specification has been objected to as failing to provide proper antecedent basis for the claimed subject matter. Proper antecedent basis for "1 phr to about 70 phr of silica" per claim 10 has been added to the specification in the paragraph beginning of page 21, line 19. This amendment is, of course, supported by claim 10 as originally filed in this patent application and is also supported by claim 11 as originally filed in the parent application (United States Patent Application Serial No. 10/002,870).

The title of the invention has been objective to as being non-descriptive. The title has been amended so that it is clearly indicative of the invention to which the claims are directed.

Claims 12, 13 and 17 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter that the applicants regard as being their invention. In response to this rejection, claims 12, 13 and 17 have been amended to overcome the Examiner's objections. Claim 12 has been amended to specifically call for montmorillonite clay, claim 13 has been amended so as to replace the word "thereof" with the word "of" and the Markush group has been eliminated from claim 17.

The Examiner has indicated that claims 1-20 are deemed allowable over the prior art of record. This amendment overcomes all of the objections to the specification and the claims. It is accordingly now appropriate to allow the subject patent application and such an allowance is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,



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